

Message Text

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71

ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE JIDDA 5706

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ABLD, SA

SUBJECT: MOVE OF FOREIGN MINISTRY AND EMBASSIES TO RIYADH

REF JIDDA 5524

1. IN A MEETING WITH EMBASSY POLITICAL CHIEF ON AUGUST 16 THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERIOR IBRAHIM AL AWAJI REFERRED TO THE PROJECTED MOVE OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AND EMBASSIES FROM JIDDA TO RIYADH. HE SAID THAT HE HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT THE PACE OF THE PROJECTED MOVE WAS PICKING UP. FOREIGN MINISTER PRINCE SAUD, HE SAID, DOESN'T LIKE BING AWAY FROM THE SEAT OF THE CABINET IN RIYADH AND IS PUSHING TO HAVE THE FOREIGN MINISTRY MOVE AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. AL AWAJI THINKS THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY WILL MOVE AS SOON AS THE MINISTRY BUILDING AND EMPLOYEE HOUSING HAS BEEN COMPLETED. HE ESTIMATES THAT THE MOVE COULD TAKE PLACE AS SOON AS THREE YEARS AND CERTAINLY NOT MORE THAN FOUR YEARS HENCE. ABOUT A YEAR HAS ALREADY ELAPSED, HE SAID, SINCE THE CABINET DECIDED TO COMPLETE THE MOVE IN FIVE YEARS.

2. EARLIER IN THE DAY THE SUBJECT HAD COME UP IN A MEETING WITH THE NEWLY APPOINTED DEPUTY MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL AND VILLAGE AFFAIRS (A MEMBER OF THE RECENTLY CREATED HIGHER COMMITTEE TO SUPERVISE THE MOVE-REFTEL). HE SAID THAT HE HAD NOT YET BECOME MUCH INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT BUT THAT INTEREST IN IT IS INCREASING. HE HAS ALREADY

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RECEIVED, HE SAID, A PROPOSAL FROM A GERMAN CONSULTING

FIRM TO UNDERTAKE DESIGN OF THE NEW FOREIGN MINISTRY COMPLEX.

3. COMMENT: IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY WILL GO AHEAD WITH THE PLANNING FOR ITS OWN MOVE WITHOUT PROVIDING MUCH ASSISTANCE OR GUIDANCE TO THE EMBASSIES TO ENABLE THEM TO MAKE AN ORDERLY MOVE AT THE SAME TIME. AL AWAJI'S FOUR-YEAR ESTIMATE FOR COMPLETING THE MOVE OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY MAY BE OPTIMISTIC--AND CLEARLY MANY FOREIGN MINISTRY EMPLOYEES ARE UNENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT MAKING THE MOVE AT ALL. A FOREIGN MINISTRY MOVE IN FOUR YEARS IS POSSIBLE, HOWEVER, AND WE SHOULD BEGIN TO PICK UP THE PACE OF OUR OWN PLANNING FOR THE MOVE OF THE EMBASSY.
PORTER

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